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LETTERS FROM FRANCE

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BY

JEANNE LE GUINER

Translated by
H. M. C.

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LETTERS FROM FRANCE

TRANSLATED BY H. M. C.

Those who have marveled at the courage and tenacity of France will better understand its sources after reading these letters of a Frenchwoman to a friend in this country, with their graphic pictures of war-time life, their illuminating anecdotes of the trenches heard at the bedsides of wounded soldiers, and their revelation of the indomitable spirit with which Frenchmen and Frenchwomen have met the present crisis.

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These letters are printed in the interest of the Orphelinat des Armées. The writer is working in all her spare moments among the refugees, and if any one who reads this little book shall feel inclined to contribute towards the support of the orphan children of France, it will be greatly appreciated by author and translator. Subscriptions may be sent to the publishers.

Houghton Mifflin Company
4 Park Street, Boston

TO THOSE
WHO HAVE GIVEN THEIR LIVES FOR
"*La Patrie*"
THIS LITTLE BOOK IS
DEDICATED

INTRODUCTION

The writer of these letters first came to this country in 1909, and, after teaching here for five years, returned to France in the spring of 1914, meaning to visit her family and then to study at the Sorbonne. Soon after reaching France war was declared, and, being one of a large family, many of whom were immediately mobilized, she began at once to help among the sick and wounded. She would have liked to give all her time to this work, but, after consulting with her brothers, it was decided that in case they were killed or crippled for life it was important for her to continue her studies in order to be better able to support those of her relatives who might be left destitute after the war. She has therefore worked hard at the Sorbonne, but during all her va-

cations, and even while at work, she has found time to help in hospitals or among the refugees, and these letters, written bit by bit, show what she has accomplished. The translator regrets that they could not have been published in the original French, but for various reasons it was deemed best to translate them; and it is with the hope that they will interest others in their bits of local color that she now offers them to the public.

H. M. C.

LETTERS FROM FRANCE

Lannion,
Côtes-du-Nord, France,
September 23, 1914.

Dear Madame C.:

At last I have half a free day, and time to write you. I am nurse in a temporary military hospital established at Lannion. This hospital is installed in a boys' school, and has space for three hundred and sixty wounded. Yesterday we were warned that a new convoy of wounded was to arrive, and we sent away two hundred of the less seriously wounded to the hospital at Tréguier. The convoy has not yet arrived. They think it will come tonight, and as it is necessary that many of us should stay awake all night to receive them, to establish them, and to dress their wounds, the strongest of us were sent to rest when we had finished the dressings this morning about half-past ten.

We begin our work at seven o'clock in

the morning, and finish at seven in the evening; we have an hour out at noon for dinner. It is very tiring. We have fifty wounded in our ward; five nurses and three military nurses. There are four military doctors for the whole hospital. Every one has a great deal to do, for about every three days the convoys of wounded arrive. We keep here those who are the most seriously hurt, and the others are sent on to other hospitals. Among the last arrivals there were twenty-two wounded by dum-dum bullets. These wounds are the most terrible — one can neither describe them nor imagine them. The first time that I had to change the dressing of one of these wounded who had just arrived, I fainted away. When they arrive, they have only a temporary dressing of tincture of iodine, put on on the battlefield, hastily, and sometimes five days old. Now, of necessity, I am hardened, and neither the sight nor the odor of these wounds of the new arrivals upsets me.

These poor people are magnificent; they are so patient in their suffering, and so grateful for the little that we do for them. They are well taken care of, pampered, made much of, and given plenty to eat. After dressing the wounds of those most seriously hurt by dum-dum bullets or other explosives, the patient always has a glass of champagne. Also the universal spirit of the people is good: everybody bears his share, in one way or another, even to the peasants (who are usually so miserly), who bring to us quantities of potatoes, cabbages, turnips, carrots, etc.; and it is like this all over France.

My brother the doctor is at the head of a very large hospital in Morbihan; my oldest has not been called, — he is over forty-five years; my third brother has been reënlisted after having been discharged, from an accident which he received several years ago during the military manœuvres; he went to present himself again at the recruiting station in the hope of being

received, for now he is all right, and he is waiting from day to day to be enrolled. The last, the *sous-préfet* of Guingamp, had been mobilized, but he was sent back to his post, where there is so much to be done, with all this organization for the wounded and the prisoners, the press, and the administration, that he does not go to bed until four in the morning, if he goes to bed at all. He will leave when his regiment leaves. I have many cousins in the army, and if they take the young men of seventeen, I will have three nephews who will also go.

At this moment my plans for the winter are unsettled. They scarcely allow any one to go to Paris, and I do not know if I can go before the month of November. If I cannot go to study in Paris this winter, I shall stay at the hospital, and I shall study there next year. One can hardly think of one's self when such a calamity is hanging over us all.

We have faith of coming out of this

war victorious, despite the strength of Germany. The wounded are impatient to return to fight. They say: "We will fight just as long as there remains a single man on our side." I hope intensely that this will be the last war of the world. What good is it to kill all these men, wound them, and leave them cripples for life? What does all this carnage prove? Whether one kills one man or one hundred thousand, he who is responsible for their deaths can be nothing more than a bandit, even if crowned; and no matter what the number of dead that he adds to it, his cause cannot be any more just. I am impatient that this nightmare should be finished, and that we should have peace. Peace in fact, not a peace so carefully armed, nor this overpowering perpetual menace; but a kindly peace, in the shadow of which all people can work in perfect quietness, to accomplish their ideal of salvation and of progress. I received today, from a friend in Boston, various cut-

tings from the newspapers, among others an article by Mr. Eliot about this war. It pleased me to see that the sympathy of the majority of the Americans was for the cause for which England, France, and Russia are fighting.

Remember me, please, to H——; my good wishes to K——. I hope she received my letter, and that the one I wrote you before the war reached you safely. Now I have no more time to write. I am very much occupied and very tired, and it was just good luck that I had a little time to myself to-day. . . .

J. LE G.

Lannion,
Sunday, September 27, 1914.

Dear Madame C.:

Your kind letter arrived this morning, and I do not know how to tell you how much good it did me. I thank you for your sympathy; it touched me more than I can tell you. In France we all sym-

pathize with one another, but it is everybody's cause. We have compassion for the sufferings of others, but they are the sufferings of every one. The same agonies, the same anxieties which surround us, as it is the same calamity which has struck us all. You, on the contrary, you judge us from a distance, impartially and freely, and as you give your sympathy to our cause it is because you think that the right is on our side. It is for this reason that it is a great comfort. I am writing you from my bed. This hospital work is very tiring, and as it lasts from seven in the morning to seven at night, without a minute's repose except an hour at noon for lunch, I go to bed as soon as I have finished supper, and I knit usually for an hour or two before going to sleep. It is necessary to knit the largest number possible of woolen sweaters for the soldiers for this winter. I have one already well advanced.

I was very glad to know that you had such a nice trip in Canada. I should like

so much to read the descriptions of your life out there. I often thought of you, especially in July and August, and I should be very interested by your accounts. They would take me out of myself for a few minutes, out of this strange nightmare in which we are living. In the beginning I could not believe that it could be true. It seemed to me that we should wake up, see our way clear, and drive away as a horrible dream the remembrance of the war. But it is reality, and every day we get deeper into it.

How strange it is, — who would have thought scarcely a few weeks ago that such a thing could have happened! The French are, unfortunately, very disunited. They are divided into quantities of political parties who are always quarrelling. The greed of the Germans allowed itself to be tempted by this apparent disorder; but one day it appeared that the quarrels were ended. In the silence every one listened to the menace that was coming

from the east. It was heard, — and behold! the entire nation, bewildered by the tempest, roused itself, ardent and united, to face it. From that day there were no more parties, but all French. One single opinion: the love of their threatened country; only one word of command: to conquer or to die.

We have hope; it grows from day to day. It is based on right and on strength. Our enemies are dangerous, but the France of 1914 is not that of 1870; and other nations have taken up arms with us to support the same cause. We have also the moral force, the certainty that justice is in our cause, and the great comfort of knowing that the great neutral powers share our convictions. I told you how my brothers, although attached to the army, had not yet gone to the front. This war will be a long one and they are saving the soldiers as much as possible. For the moment we are not anxious on this subject, — but later! The fiancé of my niece left the

first day of the mobilization, two days before his marriage; we have never had news of him since. Is he dead? Prisoner? Wounded? My niece is inconsolable. I have nine cousins who have gone, and we are without news from two since their departure. The son of my oldest brother, a superb boy of sixteen years, wished to enlist during the first days of the war. They will not accept any one under eighteen years.

"How old are you, my boy?" asked the Major.

"Eighteen years, sir," bravely lied my nephew.

He was examined and found good for the service, but when it was necessary to prove that he was eighteen years old, this was impossible; in his despair he was furious with his father and mother, — he who was usually so patient, — and wrote me a disconsolate letter. I could not tell him, what his father had told me, that perhaps in a few months they would allow young

men of seventeen years to enlist, and that then he would have the permission to go "*canarder les Boches.*"

Our mobilization took place with a precision and method which was a most agreeable surprise to us. The railroad companies had been warned several weeks before, it appears, to have enormous quantities of coal on hand. The 2d of August, the first day of the mobilization, not a single traveller was allowed to get into a train, and during one whole week every train all over France was exclusively for military uses. More than this, *every man* in France has a military book in which one leaf is red. On this leaf are found his orders in case of mobilization. For example, the book of my brother the doctor said: "The fourth day of mobilization you shall be at the nearest station to your home, at eight o'clock in the morning; you shall bring with you provisions for two days." Other books were marked the first, second, third, etc. There

were some that were marked thirtieth or sixtieth. As mobilization had been proclaimed all over France, in all the Communes, the first day of August, before noon, every man had time to prepare himself. Moreover, in every commune there are Commissioners of Munitions and Commissariat, the President of which has orders in a sealed envelope. The day of mobilization they opened their envelopes, followed the instructions which they contained, requisitioned horses, carts, trucks, autos, cattle; and everything was found at the frontier at the desired moment. Every railroad superintendent had his sealed orders also. This is why everything went so smoothly. The military books of the soldiers told also the destination to which they were to go. For example, Quimper was the destination of many. There they were equipped, armed, and sent off to the frontier while others were still arriving. It was thus in every garrison town in France. We saw the

mobilization take place with an order, a precision, and a regularity so perfect, that at first it did not strike us as anything astonishing; it was only when it was all finished that we began to admire it, and to understand what a tremendous work of organization this mobilization, so simple in its execution, represented.

The spirit of the people has been excellent. The women have accepted the war with stoicism, the men with ardor. It is the custom in France, from time immemorial, to give the alarm of war by a ringing of the tocsin. At Faon the bell-ringer went to the church and started the bell; and each stroke of this mournful sound fell on our hearts like lumps of lead; when suddenly the ringing changed into a joyful sound, such as that which woke us each morning at the Angelus. What was our humble bell-ringer thinking of? Then, little by little, all the bells began to clang, and there rose toward heaven the most triumphant chimes which I have

ever heard in my life. What was our bell-ringer thinking of? What were all the young people thinking of, who surrounded the church and were hanging on to the bell-ropes, and who for more than half an hour were making us listen to this bewitched clamor? Is it a premonition? It was the same thing in nearly every part of Brittany, — the young men did not wish to hear the tocsin, and went themselves to sound the chimes.

October 3.

I am so tired that in the evening I fall asleep just as soon as I am in bed. Oh! it is no sinecure to be a trained nurse, I assure you!

We have had overpowering scenes today. My sister has with her a Belgian family; that is to say, the mother, a little girl of five years, and a little boy of three. The father, a Belgian Custom-House officer, is in a neighboring château, where he has found a little work looking after

horses. In nearly every house in Brittany there are Belgian refugees. Some weeks ago, all their village was emptied suddenly by order of the French. The Germans were arriving very rapidly. It was night. All the poor people flew in haste. In the family of which I speak, the mother took her little boy on her back, the father took on his back all that he could pack in haste, the little girl walked. The next morning the village was burned. They went, thus, on foot, for one hundred and fifty kilometres; sleeping sometimes in a haystack, waking at one or two in the morning and starting forth in haste, sleeping sometimes out of doors, and eating — you can imagine how. They arrived, thus, at a station where they could take a train. They were directed to Lannion. Immediately the neighbors divided them, and took them into their houses. They were well cared for. One tried to make them as happy as possible, for every Frenchman understands the debt which

France owes to the unfortunate and noble Belgians.

The little boy fell ill some days after his arrival. He grew better, and has been well since. The little girl at first did not have a look of having suffered much, then she began to eat in a manner which frightened my sister. The mother thought that she was making up for her fastings; but one day she fell ill. The doctor, fearing the beginning of a contagious disease, had her carried to a hospital in the town, after which she began to fail, and this morning she died. The only cause was the terrible fatigue which she endured. Here was another innocent little victim of this war. We are much attached to this family; the mother the most worthy and refined that you could conceive of; and the two children were so sweet, — my little niece was enchanted with her little companions.

The wounded who have arrived at the military hospital in the last two convoys are less seriously hurt than those who had

come before, at least, those in our ward. Each day their wounds become better, and we can see progress and cure in the future. We had a terrible week after the arrival of the last ones. Many came with death already painted on their faces, and we had funerals four days in succession; but now all those that remain will be saved. There are many among them who will be cripples. These shrapnel break their bones in many little pieces, so that one cannot mend them, and it is necessary sometimes to amputate. Our wounded never complain. Not a word of bitterness or of hate against our enemies, even though they find themselves crippled for the rest of their lives, nor when they feel that they are going to die. They are resigned and silent, and these are young men of between twenty-one and twenty-six years! Others are always in good humor, always content, and grateful for what we do for them; but they are really spoiled children, who are anxious to return to the fire.

In our ward we have four Arabs and six negroes. The Arabs are proud, silent, impassive, — we like them very much. The Sengalese are real clowns, who amuse the whole ward. They are a little primitive and savage, but extremely docile and polite. Yesterday morning, one of the nurses was taking the temperature of one of them, and to read the temperature of the thermometer took her eyeglass in her hand. The negro found this a marvellous object, took it gently into his hands asking her to give it to him. Naturally the nurse refused; then the Sengalese offered to buy it from her, and it was necessary to use great diplomacy to get it back. This morning, at half-past eleven, I took my knitting (there was nothing else to do), all the dressings were finished and the meals served and eaten, — there is generally a little calm in the ward at this time, — so I knitted. The negro, spoken of above, approached me and said: —

"Madame, toi tricoter?"

"Oui, moi tricoter," I replied. (It is necessary to *tutoyer* the Arabs and negroes or they consider themselves offended. Moreover, it is necessary to speak a negro French in order to make them understand.)

"Moi, aussi," replied the negro, "moi tricoter."

"You are sure?" said I.

"Oui, moi tricoter," he affirmed.

"Well, then, knit," and I passed him my knitting. He began to knit with an extraordinary rapidity, to the great delight of the wounded French people, who were not capable of doing as much.

"Ma madame à moi, elle tricoter avec machine," he explained, "et ma mamma à moi, elle tricoter avec machine, aussi."

I made a trade with another wounded man, a Frenchman. This man had written a journal from day to day from the beginning of the war. During the time that he stayed here he had re-copied his journal

in ink in a new copy-book. I offered him a pound of chocolates for the journal which he had written each day in the bivouac, — my offer has been accepted, and I have it. It is extremely interesting. Another wounded soldier gave me a French cartridge and a German cartridge.

I think that I will get to Paris toward the fifteenth of this month. I should have liked to remain near my dear wounded ones until the end, but I shall have two brothers who are going to the front. They are both fathers of families. If any misfortune should come to them, I wish to be able to give to their families the most efficacious aid possible, and I think it is wiser to go to study at Paris, and to return to Boston next year. My brother the doctor is safe, for he is at the head of a large hospital, but the two others are going as lieutenants of infantry, and you know that the Prussians kill, first of all, the officers.

Remember me to H. and K. if you

please. I hope that you will pass an excellent and pleasant winter. . . .

J. LE G.

Lannion,
October 9, 1914.

My dear K.:

Your nice little letter came yesterday. It interested me extremely, for I have thought often of the splendid trip that you were going to take in Canada.

I am writing from my bed after my day is done. Yesterday and to-day have been pretty tiring. One hundred and forty wounded arrived yesterday morning at half-past two. At two o'clock, all the personnel of the hospital were ready to receive them. I got up at one o'clock, — it appears that I get up even earlier than you! They were in a lamentable state, and we were very much worried for the lives of many of them. After having washed them and changed their clothes, we put them to bed. They were so ex-

hausted that it was necessary to awaken them to give them a drink of hot coffee. They fell asleep again. It was necessary to rouse them at seven for their breakfast, and again for the surgeon's examination and the dressings; still again at one, and at half-past five for their supper. To-day it was necessary to do it again. They are so terribly exhausted that they can scarcely eat. But, as in the case of other convoys of wounded who have been seriously hurt and very tired, we have seen them change right under our eyes in four or five days; recover their appetite and gaiety; and their wounds have also made good progress.

You advise me, my dear K., to take a trip in Canada to make me thin. Canada is very far. For the moment I must content myself in the military hospital, which has as much effect as a voyage around the world.

At the beginning of the war, by the first train which took travellers (one could not

travel the first seven days of the mobilization), I went to Paris to the Red Cross, where I had been called to take an urgent post of hospital nurse in the field hospital at Soissons. Unfortunately, the telegram did not bear the official mark, and I was not admitted to any military train. I had to await the seventh day, grumbling very hard; my brother left the fifth day for his post. I started, then, on the seventh day, and the train only went twenty-five kilometres an hour, like all the trains in France. I took thirty-two hours to go to Paris!!!! When I arrived at the Red Cross, they told me, to my great disappointment, that they had sent another nurse in my place, as it was very urgent; and that now they could not — for a month at least — accept any more nurses, in hospitals or private hospitals; that every place was filled and that it was necessary to wait. The newspapers gave the same information the next day. I went back to Brittany furious, and I have

learned since that this field hospital was blown to pieces by the German shells, killing all the wounded, one surgeon-in-chief, and two nurses. What do you think of that?

Now Brittany is covered with hospitals, which are overflowing with wounded. Since the beginning of September I have been at the military hospital at Lannion. The trains are a little quicker, but they will not go at their ordinary speed until this horrible war is finished. There is a good reason for this: the tunnels, the bridges, the viaducts, and the rails are guarded by soldiers. Sentinels are posted everywhere, and it is necessary that every train can stop at a moment's notice in case of accident. Since a state of siege has been declared, — that is to say several days before the declaration of war, — one is not allowed to go from one town to another without a passport.

We have one wounded man in our ward who troubles us very much. He fell under

his horse, on a sidewalk in a city in the eastern part of France. They lifted his horse, but it fell again on its poor rider. Five days ago he came to the hospital. He can neither eat nor drink.

We have, as chief in our ward, a pupil of Dr. Doyen. He is an excellent surgeon and good doctor. There are also other doctors who are very good, in the other departments, and we have two English surgeons and their assistants. Our doctors are not sufficient for all the work. The longer the war continues, the more seriously hurt are the wounded, and as there are no doctors left in the country, — as they have all gone to the military hospitals, — it is necessary to ask help from our Allies.

I am impatient for this horrible war to end. It is terrible to think that each moment, all over Europe, men are being massacred to gratify the whim of a single person. Poor Belgium is ravaged without mercy despite all the treaties. With us,

although the enemy behave like real savages, they have found many more deceptions than they counted upon, and it is not yet finished. Let us hope that this war will be the last!

Good-night, my dear K. Give my good wishes to H.

Your affectionate
J. LE G.

Paris,
November 27, 1914.

Dear Madame C.:

It was a delicate and generous thought on your part to make me your intermediary between you and those whom you wish to help. I cannot thank you enough for the good you have done. I went to the bank to cash the cheque, and right away sent some money-orders to Brittany. I shall allow myself to send some to my sister-in-law, the wife of my brother the doctor. Since he departed, she has found herself in a very precarious

position. She has three children and her husband can only send her very little, for he is paid very little himself, and it is necessary for him to feed and lodge himself, as do all the other military doctors, with the very small pay that they receive. I sent —— francs to Madame D., the Belgian who was at my sister's and whose little girl died. Their village has been burned, their house destroyed; and she often says that when they return to Belgium, it will be to die of hunger. For the moment she lacks nothing, but I think a little reserve will be useful to her. I sent —— francs to the hospital in Lannion, to be used in distributing woolens, and knitted gloves, mufflers, and hats to the wounded who are going back to the front. I sent this, as in all cases, in your name. I still have —— francs. One of my friends from Laselle has a wounded nephew in the Hôtel Dieu. I gave him some woolen things before leaving, for he is, so to speak, cured. A Breton peasant, about

whom one of my sisters-in-law wrote me, who came to the Hôtel Dieu with a slight wound, has also received in your name jam, gloves, and a warm muffler. With what remains I am going to buy wool to knit a sweater for some soldier. You see that your generosity has made many happy. My other sisters-in-law have their families, and unless some misfortune comes, they have told me that for the present there is no need to worry about them or their children.

All my brothers have now left. The oldest could not stand the thought that he was useless, as they refused to take him for active service because of his knee (he had his knee crushed between his horse and a wall during his military service), and because he is forty-eight years old; but by dint of insisting he succeeded in being taken as instructor for the young recruits. He is an excellent soldier of artillery. He has been appointed Adjutant, and went ten days ago to an artillery

camp. His son who could not leave is very unhappy, — he does nothing at college. I shall not be astonished to hear one of these days that he has escaped, and that he has gone to join the army.

I am now studying at the Sorbonne. I am enrolled as a student. There are many professors and very few students. Ordinarily, there are seventeen thousand. This year there are scarcely one thousand! They are women or foreigners. There is one course where I am alone with a professor. We were two until now, but last Monday the other (I do not know his name) said good-bye to the professor and me, and went to join the army. The free lectures are going to begin in two days, also the courses of the College of France, of which I am going to take some. There are many courses where there are only five or six; other courses open to more people, where there are thirty or forty students. I am wondering how it is going to be in the College of France. These

courses are extremely interesting, — at the Sorbonne we have a splendid library for our use, and the Library of Sainte-Geneviève is close by. The Head of the Sorbonne has urged me strongly to stay two years; I have almost decided to follow his advice. We believe that the war will last a long time, — the Allies have irrevocably determined not to lay down their arms until peace and tranquillity can no longer be incessantly menaced by Germany, as they have been during these last years.

The French miss Ambassador Herrick very much.

It is overpowering to study the spirit of the German race. One wonders if they have any conscience left: if their sense of justice is able to distinguish between that which is right and that which is wrong. From the manifestation that the intellectual Germans have given to the world it appears that that which was ordinarily considered as a crime appears to them

just. What is, then, this monstrous "Kultur," which has been able to give to this civilized people the soul of a bandit?

What you tell me about the spies in England does not astonish me at all. Since I learned of the system of spying, — so wonderfully organized, — I have wondered sometimes if I had not met one in Roxbury. It was in a German's house, let it be understood. She had an apartment. One day, one of my friends and I went to see her. She presented to us a Monsieur ——, an officer in the Prussian army, who had been staying at her house for several weeks. He was about thirty-four years old. After he had gone out, I asked: —

"Is this man an officer in the German army?"

"Surely."

"A retired officer?"

"No."

"In disgrace?"

"No, certainly not!"

"Then why is he not with his regiment?"

"He is on a commission."

"Oh, he is taking part in some German military commission to the United States; and is the whole commission staying with you?"

"Oh! how stupid you are! He is alone on this errand."

"Alone? The German Government confides a commission to this little man all alone? What an honor!"

"He is very intelligent."

"Is it indiscreet to ask what he is doing here?"

"You ask too many questions, — this is none of your affair, nor anybody's."

I kept quiet, and did not think any more about it, but since the beginning of the war, and since reading so much about the spy system and how well it is organized in Belgium, Russia, France, England, and other places, I have often wondered if the ramifications did not extend still further. It is simply an idea.

I am sending you with this an article in a newspaper which I read this morning, telling how much the French people regret the departure of Mr. Herrick.

I thank you very much for the programme of the concert which you sent me; I read it with much interest and pleasure, also the article from the newspaper which came with it. Paris has neither concerts nor theatres. I do not mind about the theatre, but I miss the music very much.

Remember me to K. and H., and accept my most sincere thanks and best wishes.

J. LE G.

Paris,
January 2, 1915.

Dear Madame:

Excuse me for sending you, so late, my best wishes for the New Year. Since the beginning of the Christmas holidays I have been at work in a field hospital, and

I have had a great deal to do. Every morning I have carried with me my letter paper, and envelopes, and pen; and every evening I return without having found a minute's free time to write. In one week I had three nights of being on duty as well as the ordinary day work. It was tiring on account of the cold. I am free to-day, and the day after to-morrow the courses at the Sorbonne begin again. . . .

It appears to me that this awful war will never finish. Although victory seems to be definitely placed on the side of the Allies, their progress is so difficult and so slow. We are held back by a dearth of munitions. They think that Italy and Roumania will perhaps join us. Oh, that they might, and that it would finish things! The Allies are preparing themselves against an organization of forty-four years, and a system of spying such as has never been known under the sun.

At the field hospital I took care of an Apache, and I often talked with him, as

one does not often have a chance to meet this kind of animal. He said to me: —

"Mademoiselle, if you knew whom you are caring for, you would run away, and you would never come back to the field hospital."

I succeeded a little in making him confess to me. He told me that he had done enough harm to compel him to pass the rest of his life in the galleys.

"Well, what do you think of that, my good woman?"

I replied: "Here are only brave soldiers, who fought like lions for their country, and to whom we owe great care and recognition."

In saying this, I patted him in a friendly way on the head, and as his dressing was finished I went on to the next. An Apache is often more difficult to tame than ten negroes, but in the end this one was completely tamed. There was only one thing that exasperated him — not to be sufficiently cured to be able to return to the

front. He walked up and down wrathfully, from one end of the ward to the other like a lion in his cage.

The day before yesterday, the Head Surgeon received a letter from his brother who is at the front. He recounted the atrocities which he had seen, — among others, these things: —

"In a village which the Germans had abandoned, they found the mutilated corpse of a young woman, cut to pieces; . . . other ordinary atrocities, — men, women, and children who had been shot; prisoners having in their knapsacks the right hands of children; etc. . . . "

The Chief Surgeon found our Apache, and told him these things.

The latter became perfectly furious. "How do you wish that we should pay back these bandits?"

He reflected a moment, then continued: "Before they enter Germany, some one should invent a liquor to be given to the French and the Allies, which would make

them drunk like tigers; then only could they punish the Germans as they have deserved."

Notice that I write you the exact words of a real Apache.

I asked another soldier his opinion on the war: —

"Oh, well, what do you care? I do not understand it. Here are these people who come into a country. They kill every one, set fire to everything; whatever does not burn they carry away, and it is necessary besides to give them money. Then they come to our country and begin again. Oh, well! what do you expect? They have tried vainly to explain it to me, but I do not understand. Have n't the Boches a country of their own? Well, why don't they stay there, then? Here, we stay in our country, also the English and the Russians!"

At this point the good man turned over on his side, covered his head with the blankets, and let forth the most extraordi-

nary sequence of oaths that I have ever heard!

Of the money that you sent me, there remains only a little brown worsted. The sweater is finished, and has gone to the front on the back of a young soldier of the Class of 1914. I bought a little too much wool. I am making a pair of gloves with that which remains, and I think it will be enough for two pairs.

You cannot think how much good you did by your generosity, and how your name is blessed! In a crisis such as we have been passing through, the manner of living is changed. Now, people are trying to adapt themselves to the new conditions. Some become absolutely powerless to aid themselves or others, and if no one stretches out a hand at such a moment one does not know what might happen to them. Help given at such a time becomes ten times more valuable. So I cannot thank you enough for all the good you have done.

Wishing you and yours all good wishes for the New Year, believe me, chère Madame, always very sincerely,

J. LE G.

Paris,
March 4, 1915.

Dear Madame C.:

I have waited so long to thank you for the programmes of the concerts that I am ashamed. I read them with pleasure as you know, and I thought of the delicious hours I had passed last year, and before, in Symphony Hall. How far away it all seems. Boston now seems as distant as the moon, when I compare the carefree and quiet life that I passed there and the hours of agony of this year.

I told you, did I not, that one of my nephews had wished to join the army in spite of his age, which prohibited him? During the night of the 2d or 3d of February he escaped from his home, hid in a military train which was departing for the

front, and succeeded, with the help of the soldiers, in not being discovered until they had arrived at their destination. He was very well received by the officers, he says. The officers and the soldiers like very much, in general, to have a very young soldier with them, and they spoil him. He has now been accepted, — he is a very strong boy, energetic and enterprising. He was in citizens' clothes, — the supplies were far away, and he had to wait several days before he was completely equipped. For several days he was aid to the cook, — scullery boy. It did not please him very much, having been stationed with the artillery, behind the infantry, where no shells ever came. It was monotonous. At last they gave him his arms and his uniform, and behold him now, a *poilu* like the others.

He wrote me to-day, and this is how he described his flight: —

"Everything here is extraordinary, and made especially to please me! When the

war broke out and I saw some of my good comrades of the *lycée* enlisting, and later going to the front, I wished to do the same. Enlist, myself? It was needless to think of it. I was only sixteen and a half. It was necessary to find some other way, and this way I have found. I ran away among the soldiers, hiding myself as best I could until we reached the front, where I am now, happy to have succeeded in my project, and full of good resolutions. I am actually with my regiment, the 118th Infantry, resting for six days. I came out of the trenches last evening. Over there the bullets whistle, the shells hum and burst; they fire off guns, and we cry out some rough language to the Boches who are entrenched twenty metres in front of us. From time to time an aeroplane flies over our heads; the cannons bombard it, and the machine guns attack it. You can imagine how I amuse myself!! Unfortunately I have not had a chance yet to get out of my trench and run through one or

two of these bandits with the bayonet. War with bullets and cannons is fine, but with cold steel it is superb! I should prefer that this war should take place on a plain instead of in a trench, for then I could play at hide-and-seek with the Boches. I would have good games, and even more amusing than those which we used to have in the subterranean passages in the Château at Keriolet."

Keriolet, is if you remember, a museum situated near Concarneau. The family of my brother live very near this museum, and the children passed all their time in the park. My nephew, when he was not engaged in ferreting out the subterranean passages, was generally perched on the summit of one of the large trees in the park counting the eggs in the nests of the magpies.

I am anxious for this child. Not when it is a question of danger with a bayonet, — then so much the worse for the Boche who is before him, — he will get his re-

ward; but the bullets, — every one, strong or weak, is equal when facing them. His father is going to come to the entrenched camp at Paris one of these days with his regiment of artillery. From there he hopes to go to the front. He is nearly fifty years old. There is no change for my other brothers. The great drive is preparing. They say the Germans are bringing up large reënforcements to the front and we are too. And we wish that it might be over.

March 16.

You see that I write my letters a little at a time, when I can. I am so sorry not to have more time. The further on we get the more overwhelmed with work we are at the Sorbonne.

My eldest brother has arrived at Versailles two weeks ago with his regiment of artillery. He left again, yesterday, to go to Melun, and now he does not know whether he will be sent in three days or

three weeks to the front, or to Turkey, or to Serbia.

My nephew is very proud. He has written that he has killed two Boches. His enlistment has been made legal in spite of his age; General de Castelan, in one of his reviews, complimented him on his headwork, and has ordered that he shall be promoted to a soldier of the first class.

Sunday, I went to see my brother at Versailles, and it was a most interesting visit. He explained to me the management of the cannon; he showed me the light ship cannon which they were going to send to the front; they are thin and long and send their small but sure shells to a distance of fifteen kilometres. That which interested me the most was to see the thousands of military automobiles, which are drawn up in the Avenue de Paris, waiting to be used. They are all of American make,—I recognized Packards, Whites, and many other makes, of which

I do not remember the name, but coming from Ohio.

March 29.

My brother told me a very amusing story: — these automobiles had been ordered by the German Government; it was difficult to deliver them to them. The French Government made three propositions to the American agents: —

First, — "Deliver your automobiles to the German Government and we will confiscate them in transit, as contraband of war."

Second, — "Do not deliver them, and you will lose, perhaps, in selling such a large stock of automobiles."

Third, — "We propose to you to buy them at the price agreed upon by Germany."

The Americans considered the third proposition the best, and now, thanks to the foresight of Germany, France possesses a splendid corps of automobiles.

I have just this minute received your kind letter. I regret so much not having had time to write before. Since day before yesterday we have been having vacation, but this time I cannot think of going into a hospital: I have too much to do. The examination is so difficult that I am not absolutely sure of presenting myself for it this year, but in spite of this, all the hours of my vacation are precious. I shall advance as much as possible in my special work, — it is nearly a thesis that they ask of me, — having no course to attend nor lessons to prepare. They are very particular at the Sorbonne. Saturday I had an interview with my Director of Studies, — each student has to choose a Director of Studies from among the Faculty, — and he said to me: — "I count on your doing for me exceptionally good work, and that we shall be able to give you thirteen points" (on a basis of twenty). But thirteen points, — that is a discouraging prospect! It is hardly worth while.

At present, — and since the month of November, — I have as godson the nephew of my friend, Mrs. le Royer, of Lasell Seminary. The end of January, when he was convalescent, I took three of my friends from the "Cercle Amicitia," where I live, to see him. He is very charming. All three of them fell completely in love with him at once. Then it became a race to the altar; it was most amusing. They are very foresighted, — there will be a premium on husbands after the war, and from now on it is very important to assure one's self of a fiancé. The race was finished last Wednesday, when she who had won announced her engagement, and my godson wrote me to tell me of his happiness. Do you not think that when the French put their minds on it they are capable of beating the Americans in speed? They are each twenty-four years old.

Yesterday, I went to see my brother at Melun. He is very happy, for he knows

where he is to go. It is neither to Serbia nor to Turkey, but to the siege of Metz. He is certain to stay where he is until the first of May, perhaps longer; that depends on the success of the operations.

As to my nephew, he spoke too soon. The management of military affairs has positively refused to enroll him on account of his age. On the other hand, he has positively refused to leave, and the officers do not wish to let him go; so he is a soldier of the first class, but he is not a soldier. He is at the front under the title of "amateur." In six months they will enroll him, but while waiting he fights.

Like you, I think that Italy will not wait much longer before joining the Allies, but I think that the Balkans will get ahead of her, and that nation of the Balkans which will decide the others will, after all, be Bulgaria, which we thought so German, and which was, — thinking that it was to her interest to be; and which is now becoming *entirely* Germanized, con-

sidering that it is to her interest to be so. It is very curious and very logical.

The moral and material aid that the Americans give to the Allies is invaluable. It is worth an immense army. The United States is the inexhaustible stock-room where we procure clothing, horses, munitions, automobiles, arms, and supplies of all sorts. As to speaking of their generous kindness for the population of the invaded territories, — one does not dare to think of what would have happened to these unfortunates if the American people had not so generously opened their purses.

It would be interesting to go to Europe this year: the route by the Mediterranean is safe, and the Allies would like for the neutral nations to see for themselves all the horrors, and the systematic and methodical devastation which the Germans have committed in the invaded territories which have since been reconquered. Naturally the war zone is forbidden on account of the danger, but there are so many

things that one can see, — one cannot understand the horror of this war if one does not see its effects.

The horses which come from Canada and the United States are much appreciated here; they are good, kind, well broken, and in a few days they are good friends with their riders or drivers. Those that come from South America are wild, vicious, impossible to train; there are deaths to be deplored every day in the camps where they break them, and when one thinks that they are broken, it is always necessary to be on your guard, and cautious with them. They say it is because they have been so badly treated where they come from, and particularly on the boats, where they are more cruel to them. Could they not teach the South Americans — and especially the inhabitants of the Plata — to be kind to their animals? . . .

What does H. think of the Boches? If only Italy and the Balkans would join us right away, we should finish very quickly

with Turkey and Austria, — we should force them to a separate peace. These allied states would furnish the troops of occupation for Turkey and Austria, and then England, France, and Russia could turn to Germany until the latter should be so completely, so absolutely, crushed that she would not be in a position to discuss the conditions of peace when they imposed them upon her, and which would result in her being unable to equip a soldier or arm a warship for a hundred years. The French do not wish to hear talk of peace now, — the Allies still less. Germany is far from being at the point where she will accept the conditions of peace we wish for, and there will not be another peace than that which the Allies will impose upon her. If we made peace now, it would simply mean another war in five, ten, or twenty years. It is better to finish entirely, and be sure that the generations coming after us shall know peace and security.

France is covered with English troops. Orléans, which was miraculously delivered by Jeanne d'Arc, is their headquarters. They go and come around her statue. Those who are poets, or who have a vivid imagination, say that her smile has never been so gracious nor her inspiration more beautiful. All the officers have brought their families with them. They have leased houses for three years, and put their children in the French schools. It is significant, — one does not dissect the jaws until the beast is dead.

We have had a visit from the Zeppelins several days ago. This caused me a terrible cold, — those Boches are so unkind! From the moment that the sirens of the engines and the trumpets gave the alarm in Paris, the excited Parisians hastened to climb on their roofs, even though the command was to descend into the cellars. But if the regulations did not exist, what pleasure would it be to break them? And then, Parisians are Parisians! All the lights had

been promptly put out, but there was a wonderful moon. Thousands and thousands of stars shone in the heavens, and it was terribly cold. The sky was absolutely lit by the powerful searchlights, which the aeroplanes were throwing. It was more beautiful than the Fourteenth of July. The cannon of Mont Valérien thundered without interruption, — it was a veritable tumult. They threw quantities of explosive bombs: but few exploded, and the damage was very slight. It was poor stuff of the Germans; some few persons were wounded, but not seriously, and one poor old poodle was killed. Our concierge was so excited that he mounted on the roof with his lamp to see them better. The directress made him put it out.

How I longed for the flat roofs of Boston! This took place Saturday night. Monday evening they wished to give us a second representation. Behold, the Zeppelins announced; Paris in darkness; noise; alarm; and firm orders to go down into the

cellars; and behold the Parisians on the roofs, ready for everything! However, a few citizens respected the laws, went into the cellars carrying with them what was necessary for a light supper and to pass an agreeable night; for what can one do in a cellar if not to have a little supper? And these last ones were right, for they had supper; and the first were wrong to have disobeyed. They saw nothing at all. The Zeppelins had turned back before they arrived at Paris.

Wednesday evening, the Zeppelins were again announced. Have you noticed how tenacious the Germans are? They do not often have ideas, but when they do have them they wish right off that you know that they have, and they wish to put them into practice. But this time, the police, disgusted by their early disturbances, contented themselves in putting out the lights, and left the sirens and trumpets in their wardrobes, and it was not until the next morning, in reading the newspapers, that

the law-respecting citizens and the others learned that they had been cheated by the police, and the municipal authorities had played a horrid trick upon them on purpose. Moreover, the Zeppelins had again been forced to turn back, finding that the French aviators had that night had the idea of taking a little promenade in the heavens to see the beauty of the night.

You ought to be very happy each time that you have your children about you. Very soon the summer vacation will begin, and you will have many months of family happiness. I would like to know how to express to you my thanks for all the good that you do for our wounded by your work. Really, since the beginning of the war the friends of the Allies do not cease to show in every way how kind they are.

. . . . . .

Remember me, please, to H. and K. . . .

J. LE G.

Paris,
June 1, 1915.

Dear Madame:

I received your kind letter the morning of the second day of the examination, and it gave me fresh courage to face again the terrible judges of the Sorbonne. I was received, in spite of a difficult examination of three quarters of an hour.

I thank you very much for the concert programmes which you sent me. I read them with pleasure, as you may imagine. I see that they are playing more French music than in the beginning of the year. That cannot please the Boches who are in the orchestra. . . .

You cannot imagine the strange impression made here by the news of the premeditated destruction of the Lusitania. It was really a kind of stupor. One understood nothing. If they had given as excuse a state of war to explain the organized murder of the women and children in Belgium and in the North of France, —

well, this excuse cannot hold, for the right of existence of all those inoffensive beings was above the so-to-speak right of destruction which the bandits had invoked. However, the fact is, that war existed between France, Belgium, and Germany, — plausible or absurd, they could offer this excuse. But this excuse they cannot use with the United States, which has remained neutral since the beginning of hostilities. The right of existence is no more, it appears; there is only one right, — force. One cannot explain in any other manner why they have added this odious crime to all the others. We only understood the day after the crime, when we learned that all the schools in Germany had been given a holiday in honor of this great naval victory. Twelve against fifteen hundred!! It was another manifestation of the collective criminal folly to which this people are so strongly addicted. It is terrible to see how far this folly has led them, and to say to one's self that so

many innocent American men, women, and children have been sacrificed for this rage for destruction. I hope that you will not have war with Germany; there is enough blood spilled, I do not see why there should be more; but we hope that your war — if you have one — will be an economic one, a boycott against everything German or that has anything to do with Germany.

The Allies will be obliged to destroy this dangerous and formidable power of Germany if they wish to succeed. We have the firm belief that victory will never be complete if they do not also attack the commercial power, which is considerable, and if they do not destroy it. Afterwards one may hope to live several years in peace. We think that the United States are quite capable of accomplishing this task. It would be rendering a great service to humanity.

My nephew has been received at last. He was seventeen years old a few days ago,

and he can now enlist. He has been corporal for about three weeks. He was very slightly wounded, but it was nothing, and after his wound was dressed he returned to the trenches. Moreover, it was his own fault that he received a scratch, — there are some things which one cannot succeed in obtaining from the soldiers: for example, — to move when a German shell comes into their trench. Hence this explosive 77 shell entered the trench, exploded, and by most extraordinary chance displaced a pebble, which tore its way two centimetres deep into the thigh of my nephew, who was occupied in throwing a grenade. I must tell you that he fills several trustworthy positions at once: sharp-shooter, grenadier (that is to say the man who throws grenades), bomb-thrower, and now corporal. He will finish by being a general one of these days. He is proud of his wound, but professes a most profound disdain for the German artillery. These shells of 77 millimetres rarely ex-

plode, and when they do explode, do very little damage, for my nephew was less than a metre away from it. If this one had been a shell from our 75's, every one in the trench would have been killed, for they have the most frightful effect.

We cannot foresee how long this war will continue. This great retreat of the Russians will retard peace at least three months. However, everything is going well at the North of France, in Italy, and the Dardanelles. If only the Balkans would enter also, the war would be shorter; for one cannot think of peace before Germany is crushed in such a manner that she will cease to be a menace to humanity, as she has been since the beginning of the war. What ignominy hides itself behind the appearance of such puffed-up virtue!

The day we heard that Italy was coming in on our side was a day of celebration in France. All the schools were given a holiday. Those who heard the news first

were our soldiers. They telegraphed it immediately to General Joffre, who telegraphed the news to the front. There were great cries of joy in the trenches, my brother told me, and the enthusiasm of the soldiers was extraordinary. They hastened to cry the news to the Boches, and do you know what they replied? Actually this: "So much the better, it will finish quicker."

In other sections they began to attack the French trenches and to fire at the flags which they were flying. Others injured our soldiers as only the Boches know how to injure them.

My little nephew has developed new naughtiness since he has become a soldier, and the best of it is he is proud of it. What do you think of this? A few days ago he was resting in the rear with his regiment. Very near there passes a pretty little river. One evening, hidden behind a bush, he saw an adjutant and a sergeant put into the water a sort of trap made of willows, to

catch fish. They then went away. At one o'clock in the morning my nephew went in in the place where he had seen them place the trap, and drew out a splendid pike. Then he religiously replaced the trap and brought back his pike, which was eaten as dessert that day by his section. Since the offensive north of Arras, where he is, they have not fought. It is absolutely quiet, and he is sick to death of it.

My brother considers this war as an amusing sport. They say it is like a kind of hunt for wild boars, — very savage and very cruel. When the Germans first used the asphyxiating gas, many soldiers and officers from Brittany whom I had known died. They suffered horribly, and foamed at the mouth and nose, and died in agony. It is terrible; these Germans are the shame of the human race.

I was very glad to hear that Mr. and Mrs. M. arrived well and safe at New York after their journey to Europe. Since they have returned you ought to feel

much more happy. I was also much interested to hear that Mr. M. had had an interview with our Minister of Finance. This signifies that it will not be very long before arrangements can be made between the bankers of your country and France.

I shall not take any vacation this summer. I shall stay at Paris to study, and begin to work for my next examination, which is the most difficult of all, and which I cannot pass for two years. I do not know if I can stay in Paris for these two years; I do not dare make plans so far ahead, one does not know what may happen. If nothing happens, I shall stay on for two years at the Sorbonne.

June 8.

I thank you for the postal cards of the Exposition at San Francisco, which you have sent me. "L'Illustration" spoke of it a few days ago, and gave several colored photographs of it, but not the same as

your cards. They interest me very much. It appears that it is beautiful and in excellent taste. I saw also, yesterday, in the "New York Herald," that the French section was at last opened.

Remember me, please, to H. and K., and wish them a good vacation.

J. LE G.

July 13, 1915.

Dear Madame:

We were furious in France to hear of the attack of which Mr. M. was the victim. In the account in the newspapers, we also saw what courage and bravery Mrs. M. showed when her husband was attacked. It was a miracle that she was not wounded, and that he was not killed. We know very well in France all that Mr. M. has done for us; we have grown to think of him as one of our Allies. So great is his financial power and he has been so kind to us, you can imagine how furious the French would have been if the Boches

had succeeded in killing this Ally. Our neighbors are decidedly curious; this manner of wishing to command respect by crimes, bluff, and fear is very German. These Boches have a psychology of pachyderms!!

The Americans ought to make a little propaganda in France, for we do not know what they do for us. You understand why: — we have only one thought, one anxiety, — the front, how the affairs in France are going, and how go the affairs of our families. This double anxiety absorbs our thoughts. During all this time the United States feed our invaded districts and Belgium, and all of you work for us. I cannot tell you here all that my friend Mlle. le R. has told me, of the disinterestedness and wave of generosity which the people in the United States have shown since the beginning of the war, and which they continue without ceasing. I, who pretend to be so well informed on all that happens in America, I was over-

come by it. Well, it is not right to work thus for us without saying anything. We have the right to know about it, for we ought to have the right of remembering it always, afterward.

My little nephew is always very wide awake, and continues without tiring to fight the Boches. They give leave of absence now to the soldiers; his turn without doubt will come in a month. I do not know when my brother's will come. It will be a great celebration.

Remember me, please, to K., and believe me with best wishes,

J. LE G.

Paris,
July, 1915.

My Dear H.:

Your nice letter gave me great pleasure. I was happy to know that you were having vacation and amusing yourself so well. I wish you much pleasure and many nice times with your auto-

mobile. I am sure you have it now, and that you have forgotten the painful mumps from which you were suffering.

We do not hope to see the end of this horrible war for a year at least, perhaps two, for these bandits have not lost a single minute for forty-four years, during which they have prepared for war; deceiving us during this time by their Congress of Peace, treaties, etc., in order to fool us so that we should not prepare ourselves. It is that that happened; but the trap of Saint Germany missed, they must begin again.

I am not nursing the wounded any more, my dear H. Perhaps you will be thinking light of me in consequence. I was nurse during the first months of the war, but you know, perhaps, my four brothers are in the army; if anything should happen to them it would be necessary, in a measure, that I should do all that is possible for my nephews and nieces,

and I could be of no use to them unless I could earn a very good salary in America. This is why my brothers and I have thought that it was wiser for me to go and study at the Sorbonne, and to prepare for my degree of "Doctorat ès Lettres," which I had not thought of doing before leaving America.

At this moment my brothers and my little nephew represent the family in the defence of their country, and if it is necessary, I will take the place of those who do not come back, to those who remain. This is our arrangement.

I assure you it is infinitely more interesting to care for the wounded, who are so kind and so grateful, than to study at the Sorbonne, for it is very difficult to apply one's mind to study when such horrible things are going on around one.

I was nurse again, during the Christmas vacation, but not at Easter. It was too near the examination. I have just received a letter from the hospital at Lan-

nion, asking me if I can go back to nurse the wounded, and when; I hope to go there soon for my vacation.

We saw, a few days ago, in the newspapers, the horrible attack made on your uncle by a Boche. It was odious; these Boches are decidedly a race of criminals, from the first to the last, — the Kaiser at the head. Mr. M. was lucky to escape; it was a miracle that he was not killed at once, or mortally wounded. The French people were sincerely thankful to learn, several days afterward, that the wound was less severe than they thought at first, and that he would get well; for Mr. M. is an *Ally;* he has done so much for France since the beginning of this war that we are all very grateful to him.

A few days ago, at the Sorbonne, were the examinations for the baccalaureate, — the first and second parts, — and also for the degree of "Lettres et Science." It was very interesting; several young men had obtained leave to return from the front for

the examination, and others, wounded, had left their hospitals to present themselves also. However, the candidates were not numerous. There was one who came directly from the front; his cap was torn and of unrecognizable color, but he had the Cross of War, and entered the room like a conqueror. They gave him an ovation. He replied very well to all the questions. Another did not reply in a very satisfactory manner to a question.

"Why," asked the examiner, "are you so little prepared for this subject?"

"Monsieur," replied the brave soldier, "I prepared for my examination in the trenches, and every time that I went to the assault with my comrades, I was sure to lose a book and I never could find it again. The book for which I had need for this examination was lost at the attack of 'Vieil Armandes'" (Hartmannsweilerkopf). (Renewed applause.) He was received, as you can imagine.

Still another candidate arrived with two

crutches, his head enveloped in bandages, and wore the Military Medal. He also received an ovation. He had been wounded at Vauguois, and while he was stretched out on the ground, and while the combat was raging, he had only one thought, — "Virgil." He recited whole passages without being able to stop himself and without even thinking of anything else. It was a real obsession, which he did not give up until the stretcher-bearers came to take him away. These were examinations which were interesting to see. All the soldiers were received, naturally. Some replied brilliantly, others less well, but the examiners forgot, for them, their usual ferocity and were kind. It was just, don't you think so?

This atrocious war is full of unforeseen and comic instances. We have discovered, just lately, three new cousins. As they are at the front, that makes the number of cousins that we have at the front nearly incalculable. I do not wish to try to

count them. Arithmetic is my *bête noir*, but I think there are actually thirty-five.

One day one of my sisters-in-law saw a soldier arrive at her house, decorated with a Military Medal, Cross of War, and a pair of crutches. He had an easy-going air, kind, and happy as a god.

"How do you do, my cousin?" and he kissed her! (In Brittany it is the custom to kiss each other when you have not met for a long time.) He kissed also my nephews and my niece.

"Monsieur," said my sister-in-law, a little indignant, "we do not know you."

"I know it well, my cousin. I come to make your acquaintance"; and he began to tell an extraordinary story: his family had emigrated to Canada many years ago. The parents were dead. Three sons and one married daughter remained there. The three sons hurried at the first call of mobilization, leaving their sister in charge of their properties and possessions which

were in Canada. And to substantiate this story of relationship, he pretended to have, he recited a very exact genealogy. My sister-in-law invited him to dinner, as he appeared honest, and had been wounded and decorated. Then she wrote to my brother her husband, my oldest sister, and the Mayor of the Commune from which we originally came. Well, everything was very correct; we are cousins to the eighteenth degree. In Brittany when one is a cousin one is always a cousin, the degree does not matter, — second, third, or fiftieth, that is of secondary importance. The essential thing is that they are cousins. I laughed to myself all day long when my brother wrote me of this extraordinary adventure. My brothers wished very much to know their new cousins, hoping that after the war we might meet them all. There are things more extraordinary than in romances.

I have chattered so much, my dear H., that you will not have the patience to

read this. Remember me, please, to K. I wrote your mother to-day. . . .

J. LE G.

Lannion,
October 2, 1915.

Dear Madame:

I am overcome at having been so slow in writing you. I was suffering from an attack of overpowering laziness, and I let myself go, without bothering. That does not make me any the less ashamed.

As soon as I received your cheque I went to the bank inmediately to pay the bill. I turned in the rest of the money to the canteen at the Gare de Lyon, where I went to serve the soldiers the nights of Friday and Saturday. . . .

The Directress of the work-rooms said to thank you from the bottom of her heart for the work that you had procured for her people. It is a great charity; these poor embroiderers have very little work to do for the present. Their existence is very

precarious, and this order has given work to many.

I had the good fortune to be able to go to the military canteen at the Gare de Lyon, part of July and all of August. These chances are much sought after, and difficult to obtain. This is a private charity. It is free and one only serves the soldiers of the Allies and the refugees when they pass through. Many soldiers on leave, going to or coming from the front, pass through; and convalescents rejoining their posts or going to their families, etc. To every one they give something to eat at no matter what hour they come. The canteen is well organized and well known, even at the front. It was a Belgian soldier who told us so. It has been working every hour since the beginning of the war. My work lasted from nine in the evening to nine in the morning. The night equipment was composed of two women, one man and a cook. This last one was paid. It was never enough. Toward the middle

of the night it was necessary to send to get one or two of the kitchen boys to aid the cook. We others, we worked, — it was no joke, as the soldiers were numberless. One night we had five hundred. They are always hungry, and we give them a good substantial supper: — bouillon, a full glass of wine, a limited quantity of bread, a plate of meat, a vegetable, dessert, and a cup of coffee. And all of it excellent.

At three o'clock in the morning begin the breakfasts — *café au lait* and bread. Our equipment for Friday evening was composed of the Directress of the "Cercle d'Amicitia," a banker too old to fight, and myself.

The soldiers are very interesting; so gay and lively, and never cease to talk of stories of the front. There are also sometimes animals; they are not less amusing than their owners. One morning a superb war-dog, "Bellonia," arrived at the canteen, escorting forty soldiers and a lieutenant. She had several Boches on her

conscience, but she carried her crimes lightly and was very amiable. Another day a soldier opened a basket; out jumped a superb fox, five months old, and sat on his knees. We gave milk to the little fox. He drank it, but refused the meat which we offered him. His soldier gave him chocolate which he preferred. This little fox was very gentle and let us pat him, but he was very shy and hid his pretty pointed mouth beneath the chin of his friend, or under his arm. It appeared that he had never seen a woman before. They were both going on leave. It appears that our soldiers have all sorts of animals in their trenches. Another day, a beautiful Arab, in getting out, threw at my feet a willow basket which he had woven himself.

"I do not wish it any more, you can take it."

I took it as a souvenir of war.

I have many stories which I cannot undertake to write, but I shall take pleasure

in telling them to you on my return to Boston.

All the libraries in France were closed in September, so I took my vacation. I should have liked to go to the hospital of Lannion, but they did not need me, for there were twelve or fifteen slightly wounded who went out every day and that was all; so I decided to take a little rest. I leave Lannion day after to-morrow. I shall go first to Quimper; I wish to see my eldest brother there, who has been retired from service on account of his knee, — he cannot walk. He is so much ashamed of this that I think he will be a neurasthenic. Then, I shall go to Sainte Anne d'Auray to see my brother Number Two; he is Surgeon-in-Chief at a large hospital. From there I shall go to Saumur; my brother Number Four, the Lieutenant of Infantry, has been wounded, and he is having a treatment at the hospital.

We received a letter from him this morning; he has broken a bone in his

right leg. They operated on him before sending him to Saumur, that is all that we know. I shall stay a day or two with him. He is absolutely furious being compelled to stay in bed (he has so much lost the habit). I shall try to console him.

After that, I shall go to Blois to see my little nephew who is wounded in both feet, — three explosions of a shell. He was wounded a few days before my brother. It is not serious; he will not be crippled, he says, he is sure, but he is very much vexed to be wounded. I nearly laughed in reading his letter, in which he cried that he was innocent, and that his honor was safe: —

"If I was wounded it was not my fault, for I did not see the projectile coming which hit me. I should have lost my reputation except for that, for I have had the reputation of being able to escape the bombs and even, sometimes, the shells."

I think he was annoyed at being

wounded at the beginning of the great drive which was going to take place.

The regiments of two of my brothers were neighbors, and they saw each other from time to time. It was a great happiness for them. There remains, still, one brother at the front, at Argonne. I often ask myself if he will escape. He says it is hell out there; one cannot give an idea of the violence of the artillery attacks. The enemy fire on the trenches with enormous shells; they dig in deeply into the earth, sometimes filling up the trenches and burying the soldiers. One day my brother was buried five times; the last time they pulled him out he had fainted. They sent him back to the rear. One of his comrades was buried thirteen times! He became crazy. During two days he shook all the time, then he became himself again and returned to the trenches. When it rains hard the earth is very heavy, and when it is thrown up, it crushes the soldiers; then it is nearly always impossible to recover

the soldiers; they are generally crushed in the chest.

And to think that this horrible war must endure for a long time yet! I think that the submarine war will end. The Boches lose more than they gain, and they cannot defend themselves against the tiny ships which are opposed to them. Do you know how the French and English defend their coasts? By little motor-boats and little steam trawlers. The trawlers have the coal and petrol for the motor-boats. They are all very fast and armed with guns. They are stocked with food and munitions and have a very large radius of action. These boats are too small and too quick to be a very good mark; and as it is necessary to send a torpedo on the top of the water to strike them, and as a torpedo is worth twenty-five thousand francs, it is a large sum to expend for such a small boat. I know that England has destroyed many thus; I do not know that France has, and if she has,

they do not say the number. It is kept a secret, but you may be sure that Germany knows how many of these boats have given a lasting destination to their submarines.

I had many things to tell you at the beginning of this letter, but the letter from my brother arrived while I was writing to you this morning, and now I cannot think of anything else but of him, and of my other brother who is in great danger every moment. Moreover, all correspondence with the front is interrupted for several days, and we must stay without news while the battle continues. I do not dare think about it.

I hope K. and H. are always in good health. I have read in the newspapers all that Mr. M. has done for France *à propos* of the great loan. He is so good.

Thank you again for the working people you have helped, in giving your orders. I wish you all a pleasant and happy winter.

J. LE G.

Paris,
November 5, 1915.

Dear Madame:

I received your good and kind letter four days ago. I hope by now you have received mine, and the receipt from the work-room.

I do not remember a word that I said to you in my last letter, I was so upset. Wrongly, moreover, for the wound of my brother is what we call "*une heureuse blessure*"; it has not endangered his life nor left him a cripple. It only made him furious, — so furious that he was obliged to quit the front at the most interesting moment, and also because he considered his wound not at all honorable. My brother had a horse which was nearly blind. He was very much frightened one day when the commander arrived galloping on his horse toward my brother, who commanded a company. He was thrown, for he was not on his guard, caught by the foot, and received a bad blow in the left

leg. As the right leg was caught by the stirrup he was dragged. Not very far, however, for the horse was very gentle and stopped suddenly. Naturally this horse has been expelled from the field. All this took place in the rear, while the regiment was resting.

I think my brother will go to the front again in a few weeks. He looks well, feels all right, and has a strong desire to return to the trenches; but not so much as my little nephew, who finds it impossible to wait any longer. He also does not consider his wound honorable, though he was hit in the trench by a bomb which instantly killed two of his comrades; but he is very jealous of one of his comrades who was wounded in the shoulder in jumping into a trench which they were taking by assault. This one is not satisfied for one of his comrades was wounded in the same trench after having killed two Boches with the bayonet; but the world is badly made, and the soldiers are hard to satisfy!

When I left Brittany, the hospitals were beginning to fill up again. I was allowed to serve the rations, but I could not care for the sick unless I was going to remain all winter. This is much less interesting.

Now I knit every evening. I have bought a mountain of wool. I furnish all the socks for my nephew, half of those of my brother who was not wounded, and those of my godson, for I have one. He is in the invaded regions, and he has *immense* feet thirty-two centimetres long!! I have no luck!

I thank you infinitely for your generous offer; I accept it, not for me or for my family, — we have arranged amongst us. It is convenient when one has relations, and now everything goes pretty well. The Belgian family who were at my sister's are no longer there. They found a position for the husband; that which he earns, with the allowance that the French Government gives him, makes nearly one and

a half times what he earned in Belgium. He can even save. But there is at the "Cercle d'Amicitia" a poor governess, driven from the invaded regions, whom I pity. She is named Mademoiselle V. Last year she had in her care two nephews and a niece, — twelve, ten, and five years. Their mother had died the day before the war, their father was mobilized and earning a sou a day. They had crossed the whole Department of the Aisne on foot and arrived at Paris. The Cercle received them — the aunt and the two boys. A lady has taken the little girl to her house, but it is necessary to pay for her, as she is not rich. They have been lodged here for nothing, but they pay for their food, as the aunt has obtained a position as assistant teacher in a boys' school. She does not make much, however, and at the end of the year she was so tired and so used up that we were afraid she would become tubercular. So they sent the two boys to a colony of children in Dauphiny,

where they were kept for nothing. About this colony I know nothing; what I *do* know is that Monsieur V., the father, went to see them at All Saints, and he decided to bring them both back with him, no matter how. They were both sick. I understand they had not always been well treated. Now the father earns a little making shells, and by all depriving themselves of everything, they will be able, perhaps, to keep them. . . .

Mademoiselle V. has been forced to leave the Club, and lives now in a room all alone, — she who dislikes solitude so much, — and it has been necessary to find a pension for the children. They could not all be kept together; she is too frail to keep house, for she is already worn out by her daily work. The pension that they have found for the children is twenty-five francs a month for each. Perhaps a little sum of money would help them along. If you know anybody among your friends

who have old suits of clothes for boys (and shirts), from twelve to fourteen years, — so that they can grow, — and something for a little girl of seven, these will also be very necessary. The poor lady made the remark to me this year that "this year they did not give away many clothes." It is true that every one gave away last year all that they had; they did not think it would be so long. As for myself, I have nothing left to give; I gave her one evenning a half-pound of wool to make stockings for the children, and when I receive the rest of the wool I shall give her some more. She knits quickly. She comes every evening to take supper at the restaurant of the "Cercle," and often passes the evening with me in my room. She is pitiable; she breaks my heart; and, moreover, she never complains, and I noticed this evening how poorly clad she was. She is nearly your size. Please excuse me, dear Madame, for having given you these details, but if you knew how badly I feel

when I see her, and know that I can do nothing for her myself!

I thank you a thousand times for the book which you sent me.[1] I have already read it three times; it is very interesting. It is a remarkable work of psychology, this study; extremely interesting and deep. I have lent it to a lady, and I have already a long list of names of those who wish to read it. That which struck me the most — after the chapter where the author represents the opinion of the Americans on the war — was the interesting description of the German life, and the study of the character, ability, and soul of the Germans. There are in this book very profound glimpses of philosophy, and things that one does not find in all works which speak of the war. Also, the pensionnaires of the "Amicitia" jumped upon it, — they are preparing for the examinations for the English degree, which will take place the twenty-second of November.

[1] *The Pentecost of Calamity.*

As in all these examinations, there is a question on the war, and they hope to do something striking now that they have read this which others have not seen. That will be another added glory for Monsieur Owen Wister.

The submarine war has cost me three hyacinth bulbs. I will explain to you: an old lady, a friend of mine, knows a gentleman who himself knew another gentleman who was associated with the house of Vilmorin, the best horticulturist of France. This house was awaiting a boat loaded with hyacinth bulbs from Holland. This gentleman had promised his friend eighteen bulbs; he in turn had promised to my old lady ten, who was going to give me three, and now, behold! the boat has been torpedoed and my hopes of horticulture are at the bottom of the sea. But one cannot deny that for Germany it is a victory of incontestable strategic importance, that of having sunk these dangerous bulbs.

November 26.

Dear Madame:

I have neither time to read, write, or knit, nor to do anything. Our professors have become so exacting; there are ten times fewer pupils at the Sorbonne than ordinarily, and I think they must have undertaken to make each of us do enough work for ten! I do not know which way to turn.

My nephew is still at the hospital; my brother on convalescent leave, and counting on going back soon. The other is still safe and sound at the front, although he is in a dangerous position, for he is often patrol between the French trenches and the Boches, but he says this constant danger excites and amuses him.

This evening, we received news of the French success in the Balkans; the situation there is so terrible that I do not dare to read the newspapers. And we do not know whether the Greeks are going to stab us in the back. The situation is hor-

rible. I hope still in the future, but it is because I wish to hope. I do not dare reflect. What do you think of this situation? And the Bulgarians! We thought until now that the Germans were the virtuosos in barbarity, in ferocity, and in cruelty, and now after several weeks of war the Bulgarians have proved to the world that they are masters of this art, that the Boches are only poor apprentices. Now it is perhaps due to the national vanity — "Deutschland über Alles" — that the Bulgarians stay in their places and do not try to outdo the Boches at their own game.

I know a doctor who has gone to Serbia. He had twenty-five cartridges and a revolver. A doctor has the right, there, to defend himself. He said: "If I find myself in danger of being taken by the Bulgars, I will fire twenty-four cartridges at them, but the twenty-fifth will be for myself, for I do not wish to tumble alive into the hands of those monsters."

Mr. M. is really an estimable friend of France. I do not think we can ever be grateful enough to him.

I asked my nephew for some aluminum rings when he was in the trenches; I thought that you and K. would like these souvenirs of the war. Well, they were begun; my nephew does not know how to make them, himself, but one of his comrades is very good at it. He undertook to do them. They both of them were wounded a few hours apart. Naturally the poor children do not think of them any more, but my nephew spoke to me about it when I went to see him in the hospital.

"You know, aunt," he explained, "these will be the first rings that I shall make. The others can wait for theirs, but I do not wish the American lady who is so kind to wait until the end of the war."

They make these rings of the aluminum of which a part of the shells are made. They melt the metal, then pour it into a mould which they have carved in a piece

of chalk, of wood, of beet, or of potato. You see the means of executing these things are primitive. I hope that nothing more will retard the making of the rings.

I have had details about the establishment where the little V.'s were living before their father brought them back with him. It is a home for feeble-minded and abnormal children, and the two poor little things are so intelligent and wide awake, like two little imps.

I thank you again, dear Madame, for all that you give and all the work that you are doing for France. We never shall be able to say how precious to us is this help which comes from the Americans. I thank you greatly for the offer that you have made for the Symphony programmes. I will accept two or three, for they recall to me the good Symphony Hall; it seems to me that I can breathe again its air. How far away it all is. To-day, as we live in these hours of agony, I ask myself if it is not just a dream that I spent those pleas-

ant hours in that dear old Boston; but the world has fallen to pieces now, and entirely. What remains of the principles of right, of honor, of mutual respect which ought to be the foundation of the ideal of nations? Nothing at all. These words are empty of sense and the world is a den of brigands. The most fearless will be the most respected, and the most respectable will not receive the consideration that is due them unless they are able in a measure to place the end of a solid revolver at the nose of their questioner, while he delivers to them a lecture on justice, honor, and other dreams. Oh, then he will be respected, listened to, and obeyed. How delicious it all is! It seems to me that I am separated from my good year of careless calm that I passed in Boston by an enormous precipice. It was a good time, when one thought of beautiful things. It is finished. One will never see it thus again. It will be necessary to look at life in a different way, to adapt ourselves to the new

conditions, for the past has fled. We have stepped an immeasurable distance.

I was happy to hear that Madame G. keeps well. I hope that she will have a good winter. Give my kind remembrances to H. and K. Thank you again for your good letter. . . .

J. LE G.

Paris,
December 31, 1915.

Dear Madame:

I am overcome at writing you so late. I had the grippe, which refused to leave me in spite of every effort imaginable. I shall pass my vacation in bed, or nearly so. . . .

They have the vivid impression in France that things are beginning to disintegrate in Germany, or that they will soon. If only they could suffer as much as the Belgians and Serbians and the inhabitants of the invaded regions have suffered at their hands. In France they are more

united than ever, and also resolved to continue the war to the bitter end, and if the Government made peace, there would be, not only an insurrection, but a revolution in France, and it would be more terrible than the Great Revolution, for it would begin in Paris, and it would be followed with one accord by all the provinces. But thank Heaven, the Government is not thinking of making peace.

My nephew is better. He is at Quimper, in a detachment of convalescents. He sleeps and eats at home, so you can imagine how happy my brother and his family are.

My youngest brother has returned to the front, where he found my third brother. They are happy in being together. There is very little activity where they are; they exchange a few shots, grenades, or bombs, and other politenesses of the same kind with the Boches, but they tire of it.

I continue to be as enthusiastic as ever

over my studies at the Sorbonne. Last year I considered this dear old Sorbonne like a temple, a temple of light, and the more I go there the more I revere it. I wish I could study there, if only for the degree of "Doctorat" until they put me out. I must make my fourth dissertation of the year next Tuesday. It is on a poem that Roussard wrote in 1562, — "The Continuation of the Discourse of the Miseries of this Time." But I must ask to be excused; this discourse demanded so much careful research of philosophy and history. I cannot do it now. They will give me a week, I think. I have not been able to do much for my thesis, having been so busy until now, but I am forced to begin this month.

The Serbian refugees have arrived at Marseilles a few days ago. I find them more to be pitied, even, than the Belgians. What a terrible war! Perhaps the year which is about to begin will see the end; perhaps it will see a revolution in Germany;

the Boches have great need of one. They would come out of it better, as they could not be worse. These barbarians should be purged vigorously of their militarism, of their foolish pride, of their savagery, and of the extraordinary desire for lying which is in them. It has required a century to put them where they are. It will require, without doubt, another century to re-educate and civilize them, for as they are now they are the shame of humanity.

I wish from the bottom of my heart a good and happy year, and good health, to you and your family. I do not forget my good friends H. and K. I do the same for the family of Mr. M., to whom France owes so much. For ourselves, we do not know what this year may have in store. We are ignorant of all the mourning and the miseries which separate our dear France from peace. We do not know what is in the future, but we do know that, notwithstanding the very high sacrifice that is demanded of them, our brave sol-

diers will accomplish it with ardor, and we in the rear, we are absolutely united with them in heart. The future is in God's hands.

Again a thousand thanks for your generosity, and believe me, . . .

J. LE G.

THE END

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